

# Why does a Sphygmomanometer Matter?



## **Sphygmomanometer:**

This is the device that allows a health care professional to measure the amount of pressure that exists inside a person's arteries. A blood pressure is auscultated (listened to) by use of a stethoscope. The stethoscope is placed against a patient's brachial artery, located in the arm. The blood pressure cuff is then filled with air, and the blood flow to the artery is cut off, temporarily. The health care professional lets the air out of the cuff slowly and listens for the sound of blood beating in the person's artery. It sounds like a "thump thump thump" in the ear.

When the health care provider first hears the thumping sound, he/she records the number. There will then be a point at which the thumping sound goes away, and that is the lower number. The final record may show a BP or blood pressure of 120/80, which would be normal or average for an adult.

If the blood pressure is high, 140/90 or higher, it may mean that the patient is suffering from some sort of health problem, which they need to consult their doctor about.

High blood pressure can be a sign of cardiovascular or heart disease, which is the leading killer of Americans. High blood pressure should be dealt with as soon as it is discovered. Diet, exercise, and consulting a doctor can help people to lead healthier, longer lives.